

IGN Side Event:
What is the role of the UN Organization's Specialized Bodies?
23 July 2015

Introduction

Hosted by the International Labour Organization (ILO), with the support of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development (UNCTAD), the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), this side event advanced the discussion of the most effective and efficient methods to be used to implement the Post-2015 Agenda. This side event, held during the July Post-2015 IGN, looked to collect a diverse set of viewpoints from civil society and other non-government actors on how to best utilize the numerous branches of the ECOSOC to advance the goals of the Post-2015 Agenda. The event was attended by a wide array of stakeholders, including those from missions, civil society organizations, and the United Nations.

The panel included:

- **Chantal Line Carpentier**, Chief, UNCTAD New York Office
- **Vinicius Pinheiro**, Deputy Director, ILO Office for the United Nations
- **Jorge Laguna**, Secretary of Governing Bodies, UNEP
- **Craig Mokhiber**, Chief Development & Economic & Social Issues Branch, OHCHR
- **Min Jeong Kim**, Education Specialist, UNESCO Office in New York

Panel moderated by: Jane Stewart, Special Representative and Director of ILO Office for the UN

Jane Stewart, Special Representative and Director of ILO Office for the UN, kicked off the event as moderator by describing its purpose. She explained that the follow up and review mechanism created as part of the Post 2015 sustainable development framework includes proposals for thematic reviews to take place at the High Level Political Forum (HLPF) in collaboration with ECOSOC functional commissions and other inter-governmental forums. Ms. Stewart stressed the importance of creating an efficient multi-dimensional framework for effective, broad, and integrated responses.

Ms. Stewart continued by explaining how numerous goals and targets being considered have already gone through various thematic reviews. These reviews were conducted by specialized bodies brought together mainly through UN agencies, funds, and programmes. Thus, as

explained by Ms. Stewart, the importance of minimizing costs for Member States while stimulating collaboration between already existing specialized bodies cannot be underestimated; Ms. Stewart continued to emphasize the importance of exploring methods of integrating the on-going, periodic reviews into the global monitoring mechanisms of the HLPF.

Chantal Line Carpentier of UNCTAD New York Office was the first panelist to speak. She began by discussing her commitment to making economies more sustainable, and she highlighted the importance of UNCTAD in the process of thematic reviews for goals related to trade, finance, and investment. She explained how UNCTAD has a wealth of “well-tested tools” to offer Member States, ranging from review mechanisms to technical assistance.

Ms. Carpentier discussed the importance of holding member states accountable for the goals put forward in the Post-2015 agenda, possibly through peer reviews, and the importance of strengthening the science-policy interface. Ms. Carpentier ended on a positive note, stating that although the transformational goals were complex, multidisciplinary challenges, these challenges could be solved.

Vinicius Pinheiro, Deputy Director of the ILO Office for the United Nations, spoke next. Mr. Pinheiro began by explaining that the ILO already conducts annual, in-depth reviews of labor targets set. He explained that the ILO has three main global review mechanisms -- the ILO conference (ILC), the ILO governing body, and the ILO supervisory mechanisms. According to Mr. Pinheiro, the ILC conducts comprehensive consultations on both the national level and the regional level, reviewing specific targets and collecting data on workplace issues. The ILC conducts thematic reviews, with in-depth measures, for a variety of SDG targets, including forced labour (SDG Target 8.7), youth employment (SDG Targets 8.5, 8.6), social protection (SDG Target 1.3), and the application of labour standards (SDG Target 8.8).

Next, Mr. Pinheiro discussed the ILO governing body. This body meets three times per year, and countries must send reports to the ILO governing body every 2-5 years based on the implementation of the ratified ILO conventions. These reports are then reviewed by the Committee of Experts in the ILO governing body, and, if any violations occur through the supervisory mechanism, a procedure is already in place to take necessary action. Mr. Pinheiro concluded by offering his proposal to establish a special commission from the ILC to be used for global reviews of the new labor targets.

Thomas Gass, Assistant Secretary-General for Policy Coordination and Inter-Agency Affairs in UN Department of Economic and Social Affairs (DESA), spoke briefly after the presentation of Mr. Pinheiro. Mr. Gass highlighted the importance of the review mechanisms to be inclusive, involving the most diverse set of stakeholders. As stated by Mr. Gass, unlike other

functions at the United Nations, these thematic reviews are not about defending your “own turf.” Mr. Gass also described the importance of using big data, soft data, and other sources of information to successfully analyze the goals and results being produced in each country. He ended his part in the discussion by discussing the option of designing a platform to connect Member States and stakeholders and to see the results occurring in each country.

Jorge Laguna, Secretary of Governing Bodies at UNEP, spoke after Mr. Gass. Mr. Laguna began by highlighting that although everyone should be happy to agree on a transformative agenda, this step is only the beginning. Come January 1st, Member States need to be ready to implement these goals. Mr. Laguna proceeded by explaining the successes and failures of the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) from an environmental perspective. As reported by Mr. Laguna, the environmental pillar fragmented across review platforms during the implementation of the MDGs. Additionally, Mr. Laguna believed weak science-policy interfaces during the MDG era did not allow an effective link to be made between the scientific community and policy decisions made by various Member States. He highlighted the need for flexible mechanisms to be used in the review process, allowing Member States to readily react to new issues and actors that pop up. Mr. Laguna also stressed the need for synergies with Multilateral Environmental Agreements (MEAs).

Mr. Laguna continued by proposing that the UNEA set a comprehensive global environmental agenda while engaging in policy review, policy guidance, and the organization of partnerships and multi-stakeholder dialogues. He claimed the UNEA is vital in successfully delivering the environmental dimension of the Post-2015 agenda. Mr. Laguna concluded by posing the following questions for audience members and participants to consider: how can we strengthen the HLPF as a centerpiece of review; how can we maintain momentum for implementation of the SDGs; how can we enable interaction between thematic and regular state-led reviews on the implementation of the SDGs; and how can we structure a coherent, UN-system wide engagement for implementation of the post-2015 agenda?

Mr. Craig Mokhiber of the OHCHR spoke next. He acknowledged that there were many critics of the MDGs, calling for better implementation and review processes. Thus, in terms of the SDGs, Mr. Mokhiber pushed for more accountability from Member States. He stated that enhancing the science-policy interface is vital for success of the implementation of the SDGs, and he also believed country reviews for the Member States could play an important role. Mr. Mokhiber also mentioned the need to fix the seemingly large disconnect between what happens in New York City and what happens in Geneva, with proper collaboration being vital to success.

Min Jeong Kim, an Education Specialist at the UNESCO Office in New York, spoke after Mr. Mokhiber. After giving brief background on the multidisciplinary nature of UNESCO, Mr. Kim

dove into specific targets UNESCO monitors. For example, Mr. Kim mentioned monitoring and review of SDG4 on education, SDG6 on water, target 9.5, MOI 17.6, & MOI 17.7 on science, technology, and innovation, target 11.4 on cultural and natural heritage, SDG14 on oceans, sea, and marine resources, and target 16.10 on access to information and protection of fundamental freedoms.

With regards to SDG4, for example, Mr. Kim explained how UNESCO works to track progress of international education goals through the Education for All (EFA) Global Monitoring Report and the Global Education Monitoring Report. For SDG6, Mr. Kim mentioned the use of the World Water Development Report, and for monitoring Target 9.5, MOI 17.6, and MOI 17.7, he discussed the use of the UNESCO Science Report. As for SDG14, the UNESCO International Oceanographic Commission is used for review, and the World Heritage Committee is utilized for analyzing target 11.4 implementation. Finally, for target 16.10 on cultural and natural heritage, Mr. Kim discussed the use of the World Trends on Freedom of Expression Report and The Safety of Journalists and the Danger of Impunity Report.

Discussion

Fabienne Bartoli, Counsellor, Permanent Mission of France to the UN, applauded the SDG process, noting that these goals put the Member States on the right path towards equal human rights. She did state, however, that there is still much action that needs to be performed on the ground. For successful implementation, collaboration between specialized bodies and communication between these bodies is of utmost importance, as well as communication between New York City and Geneva. She concluded by stressing the importance of social protection.

Purnomo Chandra, Minister Counsellor of the Indonesian Mission to the UN asserted that it is impossible to “leave no one behind.” He described how even developed countries cannot “leave no one behind,” as this claim is not realistic given the amount of vulnerable groups. Mr. Chandra also believed that countries should review each other. He claimed that this method of review would allow for more effective implementation and enforcement.

Naiara Costa of Beyond 2015 noted that although there have been numerous calls for thematic reviews, there is currently little info on how to actually conduct these reviews. She stated that the HLPF should consider commissioning thematic reviews. Ms. Costa also stated that, in the Post-2015 implementation phase, both duplication and the silo approach should be avoided.

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